NEW YORK (UPI) -- THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ONCE HIRED MAFIA GUNMEN TO ATTEMPT THE ASSASSINATION OF CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO, TWO ARTICLES PUBLISHED TODAY ALLEGED.

"TWO FORMER KEY AIDES TO THE LATE ROBERT F. KENNEDY SAY THAT HE TOLD THEM IN 1967 THAT AGENTS OF THE CIA HAD CONTRACTED WITH THE MAFIA IN AN ABORTED PLOT TO ASSASSINATE (CASTRO) BEFORE THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION OF 1961," THE NEW YORK TIMES SAID IN A FRONT PAGE STORY.

AND TIME MAGAZINE SAID IT HAS BEEN TOLD BY "CREDIBLE SOURCES" THE CIA WAS "INVOLVED IN ASSASSINATION PLOTS" AGAINST CASTRO AND TWO OTHER CARIBBEAN LEADERS, RAFAEL TRUJILLO OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND FRANCOIS (PAPA DOC) DUVALIER OF HAITI.

ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK TIMES, ADAM WALINSKY AND PETER EDELMAN, ASSISTANTS TO KENNEDY WHEN HE WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL AND U.S. SENATOR, TALKED OF THE ASSASSINATION PLOT IN INTERVIEWS LAST WEEK.

"HE (KENNEDY) TOLD US THAT HE HAD DISCOVERED THAT THE CIA HAD MADE A CONTRACT WITH THE MAFIA TO HIT CASTRO," THE TIMES QUOTED WALINSKY AS SAYING.

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